

Credential Transparency is Essential to Attaining State Policymaker Goals

As our nation rebuilds the economy, states have an opportunity to make a different kind of investment, one focused on access to real-time information about credentials. There are nearly [1 million unique credentials](#) in the U.S alone, which contributes to confusion and uninformed decision-making. In this re-emerging economy, it is vital that all stakeholders — from students and workers to educators, employers and policymakers — understand the labor market’s needs and the education and training programs designed to meet them. That means providing information about credentials with clarity and urgency, and making it easier to discover where to earn them and their value in the workforce.

Across the country, state policymakers are enacting policies that align education and training systems to the realities of the workforce. Almost half of states are using or building data systems that make information about credentials more searchable, comparable, and actionable — what we call [credential transparency](#).

LEADING STATES ARE PRIORITIZING CREDENTIAL TRANSPARENCY TO:

- **Describe the universe of credentials:** Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, and Texas have made a full inventory of credentials available through a common, open language. Similarly, Indiana and New Jersey supported tools and platforms that use a common source of credential data.

Credential Transparency

Credential transparency means that essential information about credentials—including their associated skills and competencies—is described in a common language and made public, easily accessible, and actionable. This way credentials can be better understood and pursued based on what it takes to earn them, what they represent, and job opportunities.

- **Increase access to information about credentials:** New Jersey, Washington, Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, and Colorado and others are integrating their Eligible Training Providers Lists, providers that can accept federal funds, with the Credential Transparency Description Language and Credential Registry.
- **Signal quality:** Because the value of credential transparency rises exponentially when it includes assurances of quality, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida are adopting quality frameworks and defining credentials of value. (This signals which non-academic credentials provide value in the marketplace and lead to strong opportunities and good wages.)

- **Map effective and equitable pathways:** New Jersey will use linked, open data to develop a “decision tool” for the public. It is designed to particularly help people from low-income communities, customers of state human services programs, and those from disadvantaged populations make better decisions about pathways to education and work. Indiana is using linked,

open data to facilitate more credit transfers across high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions.

- **Reach state attainment goals:** By better identifying and sharing which credentials meet quality standards, Michigan plans to increase the percentage of residents with a high-quality postsecondary credential from 45 to 60 percent by 2030.

- **Connect secondary education to the world of work:** Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, and Ohio are publishing information about credentials, including those in career and technical education fields, to show their pathways to job skills.
- **Promote equity:** Credential transparency by definition is an equity agenda: by using the Credential Registry and publicly reporting all credentials in one open-source space, states promote equal access to labor market information.
- **Empower people with more actionable information:** Alabama is using Registry data to promote high-value, high-demand, and fast-growing career pathways and credentials of value by connecting them to the state's data system in real-time.

About Credential Engine

Credential Engine is a non-profit whose mission is to map the credential landscape with clear and consistent information, fueling the creation of resources that empower people to find the pathways that are best for them. We envision a future where millions of people worldwide have access to information about credentials that opens their eyes to the full range of opportunities for learning, advancement, and meaningful careers.

POLICYMAKER ACTIONS TO PROMOTE CREDENTIAL TRANSPARENCY

As policymakers create data systems for credential transparency, they should ensure that these systems:

- Describe credentials using a common language.
- Tap into a shared repository so stakeholders have access to up-to-date information without duplicating efforts.
- Are actionable so stakeholders can use the information to inform their decisions.

For more information on integrating credential transparency into your state's education and workforce strategies, please visit the Credential Engine [State Partnership](#) web page to access the [State Policy Roadmap](#) and [policy briefs](#), or reach out to Emilie Rafal at erafal@credentialengine.org.

Credential Engine forged a partnership with seven state leadership organizations and four workforce, education, and data advocacy/technical assistance experts to ensure that policy creates systems for credentials to be easily accessible, understood, comparable, connected to other critical education and workforce data, and communicated so that they serve everyone. Our work builds awareness, understanding, and guidance for how state policy can integrate credential transparency into education and workforce development strategies.